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## BOOK REVIEWS.

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*The Teaching of English in the Elementary and the Secondary School.* By PERCIVAL CHUBB, Principal of the High School Department of the Ethical Culture Schools, New York. New York: The Macmillan Co.

IN *The Teaching of English* Mr. Percival Chubb has given us a timely and effective presentation of the principles which should underlie work in English from the kindergarten to the high school. Perhaps the first value of the book lies in this comprehensive character. The course in English, beginning with the earliest attempts of the child to speak, and then to read and write, extends over a greater number of years, and involves more teachers than does that in any other subject. It is then highly important that the unity of aim and effort throughout the whole process should be emphasized, and that the successive teachers in the chain should be aware of just where they stand with reference to those who have preceded, and those who are to follow them. Accordingly, Mr. Chubb has sketched a course of training in literature and composition which is broadly typical of the general tendency of English studies in the best lower and secondary schools of the present time. Mr. Chubb's main thesis is that "literature and language must be taught from their own distinctive point of view—that of art. They aim to develop, not knowledge, but power" (p. 371). "Their supreme aim is the formation of character" (p. 378). This general principle is applicable to the kindergarten, where "instruction in English must be conceived of as a feeding process: it must feed with vigorous life the child's powers of admiration, hope, and love" (p. 29); as well as to the high school, where "we shall never get our students to assume the proper attitude toward their work in composition until we can make them feel that in striving for the art of self-expression they are striving for self-comprehension, self-mastery, and self-origination" (p. 322).

In illustration of this principle Mr. Chubb has outlined a course of study to every part of which he seems to have applied the tests of experiment and observation. Throughout this course the mutual dependence of work in literature and that in composition is made clear. For instance, in the kindergarten the child's faculty for oral composition should be cultivated at the same time as his sense of literary values. In the primary school will follow the first steps in reading and writing, for Mr. Chubb has no more than a courteous tolerance for those theorists who would postpone the mastery of these essential tools until the child has reached the grammar grades. In both the lower schools Mr. Chubb insists upon the importance of "feeding the child upon the very best of literary food, measured by true literary standards" (p. 27). He would have original work in composition chiefly oral during the years when the child is fettered by the mechanical difficulties of writing. Mr. Chubb discusses the question of what to read in the grammar grades, concluding that "we should make our heaviest draft upon the literary masterpieces that present ideal types of the heroic—the literature of action, of character manifested through action" (p. 127). He utters, in this connection, a vigorous protest against too much "literary surgery," the "vivisection of masterpieces for paltry purposes." Composition in these grades should be

the outgrowth of expression which is natural and necessary to the child. Training in it should be directed to giving effective self-command and power of organization of mental material. At the close of the grammar grade the child's accumulation of grammatical facts and rules may be reviewed by a brief study of formal grammar.

For the four years of the high school a systematic course of reading and study is suggested, upon which our only criticism is that there will not be time for it in most schools. When we find that Mr. Chubb expects that the reading of short stories by a large number of authors of no great importance should leave a "helpful residuum of rules, outlines, graphic diagrams, summaries, and reports, and, in connection with the composition work, compositions, reductions, imitations," etc. (p. 279), we feel that the zeal of the enthusiast has for once got the better of the practical teacher. In his discussion of the teaching of composition in high schools, however, Mr. Chubb is eminently satisfactory in outlining the development of the work and in suggesting class methods.

One point Mr. Chubb treats with bold emphasis—the general inadequacy of teachers of English. "Culture in the form of æsthetic insight is the last requirement we have made of our teachers," he says; and again: "We assert that the teacher who knows what the specific and proper office of literature is, as distinguished from that of science, is a rare and precious exception; and rarer still is one who can distinguish a first-class poem or short story from a second- or third-rate one" (p. 373). On the technical inefficiency of teachers of composition he is no less severe. "The standard today . . . is rather higher doubtless than it was a few years ago, . . . but it is still ridiculously low. We still have at times bad grammar and idiom; while, as for any stylistic quality, revealing literary or artistic feeling, how rare it is!" (p. 374). In writing his book, however, Mr. Chubb has himself done much to improve the quality of English teaching. No teacher can read the author's exposition of his ideals and methods without gaining inspiration and practical assistance.

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*A Study of Prose Fiction.* By BLISS PERRY. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1902. Pp. viii + 406.

ONE feels bound to envy "the Princeton men who used to listen amiably to these discourses," and to whom Mr. Perry has dedicated his book. It is seldom that such teaching as this is to be found, the matter systematic and scholarly, the manner unpretentious and delightful. Here is an approach to that pedagogical millennium in which our scholars will clothe their erudition with beauty, and our belletrists will know their facts.

The aim of the book is practical: to lead the student by a consideration of the kinds and methods of prose fiction to a better appreciation and a surer judgment. After a preliminary chapter on the value of such a study, the limits and characteristics of the *genre* under discussion are defined by comparison with poetry, the drama, and science. Next a chapter is devoted to each of the constituent elements of a work of fiction—the characters, the plot, and the setting; the methods of presenting each, and their interrelations. A chapter on "The Fiction-Writer" deals with the expression of the novelist's personality and philosophy of life, and in this connection the difficult but fascinating problems of art and morals, and of specific purpose in fiction, are